

PROPER WAYS TO THAW FOODS

INTRODUCTION

Thawing foods is a critical control point in preventing food borne illness. During thawing take care to avoid cross contamination and to minimize time in the temperature danger zone (between **41°F and 140°F**).

PROPER THAWING METHODS

Thawing foods properly can be done in any of these four ways:

- In a refrigerator at 41°F or colder
- Using a microwave
- As part of the cooking process
- Under running water

IN A REFRIGERATOR AT 41°F OR LESS

Thaw food in a refrigerator at 41°F or colder. This is one of the safest ways to thaw foods. However, here are a few reminders:

- Be sure to use a drip pan under the food being thawed so that drippings don't contaminate other foods.
- Thaw raw foods below ready to eat foods so that dripping don't contaminate other foods.
- Plan ahead. This process will take longer for frozen foods to thaw. Some foods may take 24 hours or more.

USING A MICROWAVE

Use a microwave to thaw foods that will be cooked immediately following the thawing process. Microwave thawing actually begins the cooking process and should be followed by completing the cooking of the food item.

AS PART OF THE COOKING PROCESS

Frozen foods may be thawed as part of the cooking process. Foods which work well with this method are frozen vegetables and ground meats.

- Allow more time than normal to cook and stir the food more often.
- Check the final internal food temperature with a thermometer to ensure thorough cooking.

UNDER RUNNING WATER

Another way to thaw frozen foods is under running water with water pressure sufficient to flush away loose particles.

- It is important to limit this method to no more than two (2) hours at a maximum water temperature of 75°F (24°C).
- This method requires use of a clean and sanitized food preparation sink.
- Avoid cross contamination from water dripping off the food. Be sure drips do not splash onto other foods, preparation surfaces or utensils.

For more information on food protection, please contact the Environmental Health Service (831) 454-2022.